

W. Taylor Birch House
3099 Q Street, N.W.
Washington (Georgetown)
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-187

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

W. TAYLOR BIRCH HOUSE

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Location: 3099 Q Street, N.W., (Georgetown), Washington, D.C.
The house is on the northeast corner of Q Street (formerly Stoddert) and 31st Street (formerly Congress). Although the address is listed on Q Street the house actually faces onto 31st Street.

Present Owner: Mr. and Mrs. Hughes Call
Mr. and Mrs. George Skinner

Present Occupant: Mrs. Eleanor Lewis

Present Use: Private Residence

Statement of Significance: This home is a good example of the "baronial" type residence that was so often built by wealthy businessmen of the period to proclaim their new status. The heavy fortress-like expression of the exterior shelters sculpturally rich and spatially grand major living spaces. The picturesque variety of the exterior helps to integrate the buildings with its surroundings and a difficult hill site. This integration was formerly enhanced by an unobstructed view of Tudor Place and by the existence of a building of similar scale and form on the opposite southwest corner.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: The building is located in Square 1282, lot 815 (formerly lots 7 and 8 of W. T. Birch's subdivision of Square 112 in Beall's addition to Georgetown). The following is an incomplete chain of title to the property. The references are to the Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

1805 Deed June 14, 1805, recorded June 15, 1805 in
Liber G folio 398
Thomas Beall
To
Harriet Williams

"same sold to Brook Beall, father of Harriet Williams but not conveyed and which fell to her in division of her father's estate..."

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1832 Deed December 17, 1832, recorded January 22, 1833 in
Liber WB 44 folio 355
Harriet Williams
To
Harriet Eliza Harry

1871 Will Book 16 folio 141
Harriet Eliza Harry wills property
To
Harriet Beall Chesley

1885 Deed June 17, 1885, recorded June 22, 1885 in
Liber 1132 folio 173
Harriet B. Chesley
To
W. Taylor Birch
Consideration: \$3,710.26

Subdivision June 22, 1885 recorded in
Liber ARS folio 155, into lots 7, 8, and 9

1901 Deed November 16, 1901, recorded November 16, 1901 in
Liber 2590 folio 442
W. Taylor Birch et ux Ida
To
John Mariner
Lot 8 and an undivided 1/2 interest in lot 7
The remaining 1/2 interest in lot 7 was sold to
Edgar Trisby at the same time.

1903 Deed January 15, 1903, recorded January 16, 1903 in
Liber 2704 folio 455
Edgar Trisby et ux Laura
To
John Mariner

Deed January 16, 1903, recorded January 16, 1903 in
Liber 2704 folio 456
John Mariner
To
Ella Truett
Lots 7 and 8

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1926 Deed April 14, 1926, recorded April 19, 1926 in
Liber 5737 folio 255
Ella Truett
To
Mary S. Cary

1928 Deed July 17, 1928, recorded July 19, 1928 in
Liber 6183 folio 201
Mary S. Cary
To
Eleanor C. Lewis

1953 Deed October 30, 1953, recorded June 10, 1928 in
Liber 10064 folio 106
Eleanor C. Lewis
To
Volinda and Hughes Call
Phoebe and George Skinner

2. Date of erection: Between 1887 and 1890. The house is not shown on the Hopkins Atlas of 1887, but is on the Atlas of 1890.
3. Architect: T. F. Schneider
(Illustrated in Selections from the Architecture of T. F. Schneider, Architect: District of Columbia, 1894.)
4. Original plans, construction, etc. None known
5. Alterations and additions: Garage added c. 1920
6. Important old views: None known

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

1. Washington City directories provide the following tenant information:

1903	John Mariner
1904-24	George E. Truett
1925-26	Vacant
1927-68	Mrs. Eleanor Lewis

2. In 1926 when the Lewis family moved in, they chose to change the address from 1601 Congress Street to the present address on Q Street. Mr. Ernest Lewis was Commissioner of the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1929 and President of the Georgetown Citizens Association in 1938.

3. For additional biographical information on the Beall family see HABS No. DC-154.

Prepared by Ellen J. Schwartz
Architectural Historian
Commission of Fine Arts
August, 1968

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: 3099 Q Street, N.W. is a good example of an end of the nineteenth century Victorian baroque mansion. Both on the interior and exterior it is a pretender to the title of "grand residence". The academic picturesqueness of the exterior is complemented by the formal textural richness of the interior. Because of the manner in which it dominates a key site in Georgetown (southeast of Tudor Place) it is a critical node in the architectural structure of the northeast area.
2. Condition of fabric: The house is in generally good condition. There are, however, at present, several roof leakage problems, which threaten the upper floor ceilings. Both the interior and the exterior remain largely of late nineteenth century character.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 3099 Q Street is located at the northwest corner of 31st and Q Streets with its north wall approximately 55' north of the centerline of Q Street. The dimensions of the "L" shaped three story brick residence are approximately 50' for the nominally east-west leg and approximately 35' for the nominally north-south leg.
2. Foundations: The brick bearing walls are carried down as foundations for the house.
3. Wall construction: A chief feature of this wall bearing structure is modulation of the wall surface in both form

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and texture. At the south and west elevations the basement level is surfaced with brownstone. This surfacing extends to the second floor window sill line at the entry (west) elevation and around the southwest circular tower. Further use of this sandstone occurs in a series of smooth or rough belt courses. Red brick wall features include a dentil-like band above the second floor windows, arched lintels on the tower windows, and a colonette band at the level of the third floor windows of the tower. In addition, brick colonette buttresses are placed at the two corners of the south elevation two story bay projection of the dining room leg.

4. Framing: As visible in the attic roof, framing is with 2" x 8" wood joists. Other framing is not visible.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: At the south side of the living room is a wood and stone porch giving access to the dining room. The two slope roof (to south and west) is wooden framed and is supported by four wood columns. These columns have simple unfluted shafts and bell-shaped capitals. The porch is surrounded by a gray-brown sandstone railing. Steps to the porch are located at the east half of the south side and the ascent of 7 stone risers is in a straight run up from south to north.

At the main entry (west elevation) the stoop and steps are of gray-brown sandstone. The four risers are bracketed by sandstone grid railings ended by rounded cone sandstone newel posts.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The main entry to the north of tower is fitted with a pair of wood single light vestibule doors and a 3' 2" x 7' seven panel wood door with a large glass light and transom light above.

The seven panel heavy wood door from the south porch to the dining room is 2' 11" x 7'.

- b. Windows and shutters: A variety of window sizes and shapes highlight the exterior. On the first

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floor the living room has four 6/1 light double-hung wood sash with the upper sash being 1/3 the height of the lower sash. Both the lower light and the horizontal members of the sash are curved in correspondence to the circumferential curve of the tower. Over each of the windows is a blanked-out transom. In the dining room 1/1 light double-hung wood sash are used. The entry hall is lit by a pair of single casements with nine leaded lights. The main stairway is lit by a pair of 9/9 light double-hung wood sash at the first floor landing. The closet at the west side of the entry hall is lit by a pair of approximately 1' x 2' 6" six light fixed sash.

The second floor generally uses 1/1 light double-hung wood sash of approximately 6' 6" height. The three windows in the tower have both lights and horizontal members of the sash curved in conformity with the circumferential curve of the tower.

Windows on the third floor are 1/1 light double-hung wood sash. The five windows in the tower are of this type but have semicircular headed upper sash.

At both the tower and the south elevations all large windows on all three floors have internal folding shutters. Each window has a lower and an upper pair of two panel shutters, the lower pair having adjustable horizontal louvers.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The hipped roof is almost obscured by the conical roof of the tower at the southwest and the flat roof of the projecting bay at the southeast. Roof covering is with thin pieces of slate.
- b. Cornice, eaves: At the edge of the hipped roof at the south and the east there are metal ornamental gutter facings. At the tower the eaves are supported by single wood brackets. At the southeast the third floor bay projection is topped by a heavy balustrade supported by stone block brackets and ended at the east and west corners by pseudo-bartizans.

- c. Cupolas, dormers, towers: The one dormer of the house is located at the west roof slope and is fitted with a pair of 1/1 light double-hung sash. It is topped by a triangular pediment ornamented with a central rinceau motif. Attached to the upper corner of the dormer are pseudo-bartizan features.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans: The first floor plan of this asymmetrically planned house has an entry hall at the northwest, the living room at the southeast and a pantry at the northwest. This pantry is connected to the basement kitchen by a dumbwaiter at the southeast corner of the pantry.

The second floor has one bedroom each at the north, west and south, a study at the southwest, and a bath at the northeast.

On the third floor there are three bedrooms; one each at the northwest, southwest, and southeast. In addition there is a bath at the center of the east half of the house and a small kitchen has been added in the mid-20th century at the northeast corner of the plan.

The full basement contains, at present, a series of storage rooms and a laundry. Evidence of the use of the east half as a kitchen in the 19th century is to be found in the cast iron stove that remains.

2. Stairways: The 3' 9" wide half-turn main staircase is a major ornamental feature of the house and is located at the east side of the entry hall. The run to the second floor is seven risers up from south to north to the landing and then back 13 risers. The ascent to the third floor has a run of 12 risers up from south to north and a return of 6 risers.

Carving of the various wood appurtenances of the stairway at the first floor is generally quite rich. Three floor-ceiling posts at the west side of the stair visually establish the space of the stair as separate from that of the hall. These posts are decorated with floral carved wood bases and capitals. The balusters of the stairrun and the landing are closely spaced turned wood sections.

Both the posts and the balusters have been painted in the 20th century.

Additional minor stairs in the house include a service stair from the pantry to the first floor landing. It is a straight run up from south to north. Under the run of the main stair from the landing to the second floor a half-turn wood stair descends from the south to the north to the basement. On the third floor a corner winder stairway located between the southwest and the southeast bedroom ascends from west to east to the attic.

3. Flooring: The first floor retains its original narrow board oak flooring. At the second and third floors, however, oak parquet flooring in a checkerboard pattern has been added in the early 20th century.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls and ceilings are generally of painted or wall-papered plaster. The ceiling in the entry hall however is a grid pattern of square wood panels. It has been painted an off-white in the 20th century.
5. Doorways and doors: Door types vary from floor to floor. the third floor has simple four panel wood doors with single wood panel transoms, while the second floor has six panel wood doors with the same single panel transom.

At the first floor there are two sets of heavy wood sliding doors. A pair of 3' doors closes the opening between the entry hall and the living room and a set of 3' 6" doors closes the opening between dining and living spaces. Both sets of doors slide completely into wall pockets.

6. Decorative features and trim: Door trim varies in size and form from floor to floor. At the second and third levels it is 6" and 5" wide respectively. Upper corners are fitted with bulls eye square corner blocks. At the first floor the door trim is 6" wide. The doorways are crowned by a simple wood cornice molding, and corner blocks are ornamented with a four part leaf pattern wood appliques.

Molded top baseboards are 8" high at the third floor, 9 1/2" at the second floor and 11" at the first floor.

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Additional trim includes an oak panelled wainscot in both the entry hall and the dining room. That in the dining room is 4' 1" high and that in the entry hall is 4' 5" high.

In both the dining room and the living room there are ceiling plaster features. These include a heavy unornamented cornice band and an approximately 2 1/2' x 2' molded lighting fixture base at the center of the ceiling of each room.

7. Notable hardware: Most of the original 19th century door and window hardware is still present. Of special note is the cast metal oriental geometric and floral patterned catch plates and keyhole plates of the sliding doors of the first floor.
8. Lighting: The major feature of note is the 19th century glass chandelier in the dining room. It is a gas fixture with four branches with glass hung in several concentric rings of several diameters. It was present in the house when it was purchased by Ernest Lewis in 1926.
9. Heating: Fireplaces with their ornamental mantelpieces provide foci for the major rooms. Those on the first floor are especially unique. The living room fireplace has a tile hearth and a tile facing with projecting garland band. The opening itself has a metal fireback and a round headed ornamental metal facing plate. The 6' x 4' high wood mantel has a straight line mental shelf supported by two free-standing floral decorated columns. In the dining room the fireplace opening has a tile hearth and a tile facing. The 6' x 4' high mantelpiece has a straight line shelf supported by two pilasters with foliate capitals.

All three second floor fireplaces have tiled hearths, tiled facings and wood mantelpieces. Typical is that of the south wall of the southwest study. It is fitted with seventeen 6" square aquamarine colored facing tiles. Those at the upper corners and at the center of the lintel are embossed with full face boys' heads. The hearth is of 3" square dark green glazed tiles edged by a 1/2" rosette band of green-brown tiles. The metal fireback is embossed with a floral pattern. The mantel is 4' 1" x 3' 11" high with a simple wood mantel shelf.

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The fireplace at the north wall of the northwest bedroom has its tiled hearth and facing painted over with black. The 6" square facing tiles are floral patterned with the exception of those at the upper corners which are embossed with full face heads. The metal fireback is embossed with a rosette pattern. The mantelpiece is 5' 3" x 3' 11" high with a 3' 9" x 3' 11" overmantel mirror.

In the southeast bedroom the tiled face and tiled hearth fireplace has had its fireback removed and its mantel has been altered.

On the third floor the fireplace in the southeast bedroom is similar to those in the bedroom on the second floor. Its tile facing is blue and the upper corner tiles are full-face medusa heads. Its fireback is cast in a rosette pattern.

The other open fireplace on the third floor is at the north wall of the northwest bedroom. It is a 20th century addition in terms of its mantelpiece. This is of black marble 5' x 3' 8" with a semicircular headed opening.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: 3099 Q Street dominates the northeast corner of 31st Street and Q streets from its hillside site. It sits on an embankment approximately 4' above sidewalk grade at the south. Tudor Place is located to the northwest and the Lewis house formerly was fronted by companion large brick mansions at the southeast and southwest corners of 31st and Q.
2. Enclosures: Brick retaining walls were built in the mid-20th century at the south and west sidewalks. In the yard to the east there is an approximately 8' high brick wall to the north and a low snow fence to the east.
3. Outbuildings: Approximately 20' from the east wall of the house is a 20' deep and 18' wide sunken garage of early 20th century date. Its roof is level with the rear yard and its floor is 10' below rear yard grade. It is

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entered from Q Street by a downward sloping concrete ramp. There is a flight of 15 concrete steps along the west side of the garage up from south to north to the rear yard level.

4. Walks: The house fronts onto two sidewalks; that at the south is concrete and that at the west is of brick. From the south walk a brick walk and steps lead to the entry at the west elevation. From the street at the southwest corner of the property, a series of 4 risers from south to north leads to a brick platform. From this, 5 brick risers ascend to the walk which leads past the tower to the entry steps at the west elevation. This arrangement supercedes a 19th century arrangement in which straight runs led from the west walk directly to the west entry and from the south walk directly to the south porch.
5. Landscaping: The house is framed on all three open sides (south, east and west) by large shade trees.

Prepared by William P. Thompson
Architect
Commission of Fine Arts
August, 1968

ADDENDUM TO:
W. TAYLOR BIRCH HOUSE
Georgetown
3099 Q Street, Northwest
Washington
District of Columbia

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PHOTOGRAPHS

PAPER COPIES OF COLOR TRANSPARENCIES

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

W. TAYLOR BIRCH HOUSE

This report is an addendum to an 11 page report previously transmitted to the Library of Congress.

Location: 3099 Q Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Present Owner: JoAnn Crisp-Ellert, Ph.D. and Robert Ellert, Ph.D.

Present Use: Private residence

Significance: Reflecting the late nineteenth-century evolution of Richardson Romanesque into a more eclectic, revival style, the Birch House also strongly demonstrates the evolution of Georgetown, and especially Georgetown Heights, from country estates oriented towards the port to densely developed residences oriented only in terms of the street grid.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: No building permit has been found, but as the property shows up in the Hopkins Atlas of 1890, but not 1887, dating the house between 1887 and 1890 is reasonable and is stylistically consistent.

2. Original and subsequent owners: The building is located in Square 1282, lot 815 (formerly lots 7 and 8 of W. T. Birch's subdivision of Square 112 in Beall's addition to Georgetown). The following is an incomplete chain of title to the property. The references are to the Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

1805	Deed June 14, 1805, recorded June 15, 1805 in Liber G folio 398 Thomas Beall To Harriet Williams
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"same sold to Brook Beall, father of Harriet Williams but not conveyed and which fell to her in division of her father's estate ..."

ADDENDUM TO
W. TAYLOR BIRCH HOUSE
HABS No. DC-187
(page 13)

1832 Deed December 17, 1832, recorded January 22, 1833 in Liber WB 44
folio 355
Harriet Williams
To
Harriet Eliza Harry

1871 Will Book 16 folio 141
Harriet Eliza Harry wills property
To
Harriet Beall Chesley

1885 Deed June 17, 1885, recorded June 22, 1885, Liber 1132 folio 173
Harriet B. Chesley
To
W. Taylor Birch
Consideration: \$3,710-26

Subdivision June 22, 1885 recorded in Liber ARS folio 155, into -lots 7, 8, and 9

1901 Deed November 16, 1901, recorded November 16, 1901 in Liber 2590
folio 442
W. Taylor Birch et ux Ida
To
John Mariner

Lot 8 and an undivided 1/2 interest in lot 7
The remaining 1/2 interest in lot 7 was sold to Edgar Trisby at the same
time.

1903 Deed January 15, 1903, recorded January 16, 1903 in Liber 2704 folio
455
Edgar Trisby et ux Laura
To
John Mariner

Deed January 16, 1903, recorded January 16, 1903 in Liber 2704 folio
456
John Mariner
To
Ella Truett
Lots 7 and 8

ADDENDUM TO
W. TAYLOR BIRCH HOUSE
HABS No. DC-187
(page 14)

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1926 | Deed April 14, 1926, recorded April 19, 1926 in
Liber 5737 folio 255
Ella Truett
To
Mary S. Cary |
| 1928 | Deed July 17, 1928, recorded July 19, 1928 in
Liber 6183 folio 201
Mary S. Cary
To
Eleanor C. Lewis |
| 1953 | Deed October 30, 1953, recorded June 10, 1928 in
Liber 10064 folio 106
Eleanor C. Lewis
To
Volinda and Hughes Call
Phoebe and George Skinner |
| 1974 | Deed (July 15, 1974)
purchased by the Ellerts |

3. Architect: T. F. Schneider (Illustrated in Selections from the *Architecture of T. F. Schneider, Architect*: District of Columbia, 1894.) He was a prominent architect and developer who also designed the Cairo Apartment Building at 1615 Q Street, N.W.

4. Original plans, construction, etc. None known

5. Alterations and additions: Garage added in 1926 and numerous other alterations such as the third floor kitchen and pool were added subsequently. In the entrance hall near the kitchen, at least one section of wall is not plaster, suggesting recent alterations of unknown extent.

B. Historical Context:

Washington City directories provide the following tenant information:
1903 John Mariner, 1904-24 George E. Truett, 1925-26 vacant, and 1927-68 Mrs. Eleanor Lewis.

Two significant individuals are associated with the house. W. Taylor Birch, the property owner who had the house built, was a Georgetown real estate speculator. That he chose to build there suggests that Georgetown Heights had retained its desirability even late in the nineteenth

century and it reflected the reality that there were not as many sites to build on. Birch's architect centered the building around the corner of 31st and Q Streets, by building the corner tower. No longer were houses oriented to the south because the port of Georgetown was no longer economically important and because the dense, taller development of Georgetown eliminated the impressive views south that once existed. Across 31st Street from the Birch House stood and stands Tudor Place, diagonally across the street the Dunlops had built a large house with gardens (adjacent to the Washington Bowie property), and across Q Street there was also a large late nineteenth-century residence. At the end of the nineteenth century, Birch's house was sited on a desirable corner lot with large late nineteenth-century houses on three of the four corners.

"In 1926 when the Lewis family moved in, they chose to change the address from 1601 Congress Street to the present address on Q Street. Mr. Ernest Lewis was Commissioner of the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1929 and President of the Georgetown Citizens Association in 1938." (The source of architectural historian Ellen Schwartz's statements is unknown.) The change of address reflects the fact that once Q Street was continued across the bridge over Rock Creek which opened in approximately 1915, Q Street clearly was a more important as it linked upper Georgetown to downtown Washington, D.C. and therefore Q Street became the more prestigious address than 31st Street.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Ellen Schwartz wrote in the original HABS history of the property that "3099 Q Street, N.W. is a good example of an end of the nineteenth century Victorian baroque mansion. Both on the interior and exterior it is a pretender to the title of 'grand residence'. The academic picturesqueness of the exterior is complemented by the formal textural richness of the interior. Because of the manner in which it dominates a key site in Georgetown (southeast of Tudor Place) it is a critical node in the architectural structure of the northeast area."

As stated earlier, the corner tower of the house relates the house to the site and enables it to dominate the corner. But as the house occupies a rather tight site, the architect was forced to build tall and create an end pavilion on Q Street to suggest that the building has greater horizontal massing. On, 31st Street, by contrast, there was not the room to build another end pavilion and there is only a narrow space between this house and its neighbor to the north. The houses are so close that from the south it looks like the round end bay of the house north of the Birch House actually is part of the Birch House and is an end pavilion, echoing in massing the pavilion on 31st Street and creating the impression that the Birch House is much larger than it is.

The massiveness and color of the sandstone blocks of the basement and first floor clearly express the influence of the architecture of H. H. Richardson who died in 1886, about the time the house was being built. His influence is also obvious in the massive paneled door, transom and squat coupled columns and squat windows to the north of the door. The upper floors of the exterior are less Richardsonian and more the various late nineteenth-century revivals made popular by Richard Norman Shaw and by Richardson's former employees, McKim, Mead, & White. Stanford White's design influence is especially apparent in the first floor landing's wall, ceiling, and stair treatment.

2. Condition of fabric: The house is in generally good condition. Both the interior and the exterior remain largely of late nineteenth century character. First floor ceilings and cornice have been patched to correct for water damage.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 3099 Q Street is located at the northwest corner of 31st and Q Streets with its north wall approximately 551 north of the centerline of Q Street. The dimensions of the "L" shaped three story brick residence are approximately 501 for the nominally east-west leg and approximately 351 for the nominally north-south leg.

2. Foundations: The brick bearing walls are carried down as foundations for the house.

3. Walls: A chief feature of this wall bearing structure is modulation of the wall surface in both form and texture. At the south and west elevations the basement level is surfaced with brownstone. This surfacing extends to the second floor window sill line at the entry (west) elevation and around the southwest circular tower. Further use of this sandstone occurs in a series of smooth or rough belt courses. Red brick wall features include a dentil-like band above the second floor windows, arched lintels on the tower windows, and a colonette band at the level of the third floor windows of the tower. In addition, brick colonette buttresses are placed at the two corners of the south elevation two story bay projection of the dining room leg.

4. Framing: As visible in the attic roof framing is with 2" x 8" wood joists. Other framing is not visible.

5. Porches, stoops: At the south side of the living room is a wood and stone porch giving access to the dining room. The two slope roof (to south and west) is wooden framed and is supported by four wood columns. These columns have simple unfluted shafts and bell-shaped capitals. The porch is surrounded by a gray-brown sandstone railing. Steps to the porch are located at the east half of the south side and the ascent of seven stone risers is in a straight run up from south to north.

At the main entry (west elevation) the stoop and steps are of gray-brown sandstone. The four risers are bracketed by sandstone grid railings ended by rounded cone sandstone newel posts.

6. Chimneys: Three rectangular chimneys are located on the north, east and south facades, with the last being a major design element, placed between the corner tower and the windows on the south. That large chimney rises well above the corner tower and is decorated with blind arches and dentil cornice. In its prominence and decoration it is typical of large houses, urban and suburban, erected at the end of the nineteenth century.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The main entry to the north of tower is fitted with a pair of wood single light vestibule doors and a 3' 2" x 7' seven panel wood door with a large glass light and transom light above,

The seven panel heavy wood door from the south porch to the dining room is 2' 11" x 7'.

b. Windows and shutters. A variety of window sizes and shapes highlight the exterior, On the first floor the drawing room has four 6/1 light doublehung wood sash with the upper sash being 1/3 the height of the lower sash. Both the lower light and the horizontal members of the sash are curved in correspondence to the curve of the tower. Over each of the windows is a transom. In the dining room 1/1 light double hung wood sash are used. The entry hall is lit by a pair of single casements with nine leaded lights. The main stairway is lit by a pair of 9/9 light double hung wood sash at the first floor landing. The closet at the west side of the entry hall is lit by a pair of approximately 1' x 2' 6" six light fixed sash.

The second floor generally uses 1/1 light double hung wood sash of approximately 6' 6" height. The three windows in the tower have both lights and horizontal members of the sash curved in conformity with the curve of the tower.

Windows on the third floor are 1/1 light double hung wood sash. The five windows in the tower are of this type but have semicircular headed upper sash.

At both the tower and the south elevations all large windows on all three floors have internal folding shutters. Each window has a lower and an upper pair of two panel shutters, the lower pair having adjustable horizontal louvers.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The hipped roof is almost obscured by the conical roof of the tower at the southwest and the flat roof of the projecting bay at the southeast. Roof covering is with thin pieces of slate.

b. Cornice, eaves: At the edge of the hipped roof at the south and the east there are metal ornamental gutter facings. At the tower the eaves are supported by single wood brackets. At the southeast the third floor bay projection is topped by a heavy balustrade supported by stone block brackets and, ended at the east and west corners by bartizans.

c. Dormers: The one dormer of the house is located at the west roof slope and is fitted with a pair of 1/1 light double-hung sash. It is topped by a triangular pediment ornamented with a 1 vines and leaves motifs and the upper corner of the dormer are bartizan features.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. The first floor plan of this asymmetrically planned house has an entry hall at the northwest, the drawing room at the southwest, the dining room at the southeast, and a pantry at the northeast. This pantry is connected to the basement kitchen by a dumbwaiter at the southeast corner of the pantry.

b. The second floor has one bedroom each at the north, west and south, a study at the southwest, and a bath at the northeast.

c. On the third floor there are three bedrooms, one each at the northwest, southwest, and southeast. In addition there is a bath at the center of the east half of the house and a small kitchen has been added in the mid-twentieth century at the northeast corner of the plan.

d. The full basement contains, at present, a series of storage rooms and a laundry, Evidence of the use of the east half as a kitchen in the nineteenth century is to be found in the cast iron stove that remains.

2. Stairway: The 3' 9" wide half, turn main staircase is a major ornamental feature of the house and is located at the east side of the entry hall. The run to the second floor is seven risers up from south to north to the landing and then back thirteen risers. The ascent to the third floor has a run of twelve risers up from south to north and a return of six risers.

Carving of the various wood appurtenances of the stairway at the first floor is generally quite rich. Three floor to ceiling posts at the west side of the stair visually establish the space of the stair as separate from that of the hall. These posts are decorated with floral carved wood

bases and capitals. The balusters of the stairs and the landing are closely spaced turned wood sections.

Both the posts and the balusters have been painted in the twentieth century.

Additional minor stairs in the house include a service stair from the pantry to the first floor landing. It is a straight run up from south to north. Under the run of the main stair from the landing to the second floor a half-turn wood stair descends from the south to the north to the basement. On the third floor a corner winder stairway located between the southwest and the southeast bedroom ascends from west to east to the attic.

3. Flooring: The first floor retains its original narrow board oak flooring. At the second and third floors, however, oak parquet flooring in a checkerboard pattern was added in the early twentieth century.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls and ceilings are generally of painted or wall-papered plaster. The ceiling in the entry hall however is a grid pattern of square wood panels. It has been painted an off-white in the twentieth century.

5. Doorways and doors: Door types vary from floor to floor. The third floor has simple four panel wood doors with single wood panel transoms, while the second floor has six panel wood doors with the same single panel transom.

At the first floor there are two sets of heavy wood sliding doors. A pair of 3' doors closes the opening between the entry hall and the drawing room and a set of 3' 6" doors closes the opening between dining and drawing rooms. Both sets of doors slide completely into wall pockets.

6. Decorative features and trim: Door trim varies in size and form from floor to floor. At the second and third levels it is 6" and 5" wide respectively. Upper corners are fitted with bulls eye square corner blocks. At the first floor the door trim is 6" wide. The doorways are crowned by a simple wood cornice molding, and corner blocks are ornamented with a four part leaf pattern wood appliques.

Molded top baseboards are 8" high at the third floor, 9 ½" at the second floor and 11" at the first floor.

Additional trim includes an oak paneled wainscot in both the entry hall and the dining room. That in the dining room is 4' 1" high and that in the entry hall is 4' 5" high.

Of special interest is the tile vestibule floor consisting of two bands of tile (guilloche border, then distorted squares) flanking alternating black and white triangles.

In both the dining room and the drawing room there are ceiling plaster features. These include a heavy unornamented cornice band and an approximately 2 ½' x 2' molded lighting fixture base at the center of the ceiling of each room.

Fireplaces with their ornamental mantelpieces provide foci for the major rooms. Those on the first floor are especially unique. The drawing room fireplace has a tile hearth and a tile facing with projecting garland band. The opening itself has a metal fireback and a round headed ornamental metal facing plate. The 6' x 4' high wood mantel has a straight line metal shelf supported by two free-standing floral decorated columns. In the dining room the fireplace opening has a tile hearth and a tile facing. The 6' x 4' high mantelpiece has a straight line shelf supported by two pilasters with foliate capitals.

All three second floor fireplaces have tiled hearths, tiled facings and wood mantelpieces. Typical is that of the south wall of the southwest study. It is fitted with seventeen 6" square aquamarine colored facing tiles. Those at the upper corners and at the center of the lintel are embossed with full face boys' heads. The hearth is of 3" square dark green glazed tiles edged by a 1/2" rosette band of green-brown tiles. The metal fireback is embossed with a floral pattern. The mantel is 4' 1" x 3' 11" high with a simple wood mantel shelf.

The fireplace at the north wall of the northwest bedroom has its tiled hearth and facing painted over with black. The 6" square facing tiles are floral patterned with the exception of those at the upper corners which are embossed with full face heads. The metal fireback is embossed with a rosette pattern. The mantelpiece is 5'3" x 3' 11" high with a 3' 9" x 3' 11" overmantel mirror.

In the southeast bedroom the tiled face and tiled hearth fireplace has had its fireback removed and its mantel has been altered.

On the third floor the fireplace in the southeast bedroom is similar to those in the bedroom on the second floor. Its tile facing is blue and the upper corner tiles are full-face medusa heads. Its fireback is cast in a rosette pattern.

The other open fireplace on the third floor is at the north wall of the northwest bedroom. It is a twentieth-century addition in terms of its mantelpiece. This is of black marble 51 x 31 8" with a semicircular headed opening.

7. Hardware: Most of the original nineteenth-century door and window hardware is still present. Of special note is the cast metal oriental geometric and floral patterned catch plates and keyhole plates of the sliding doors of the first floor. Also notable is the servant's bell in the dining room.

8. Lighting: The major feature of note is the nineteenth-century glass chandelier in the dining room. It is a gas fixture with four branches with glass hung in several concentric rings of several diameters. It was present in the house when it was purchased by Ernest Lewis in 1926.

9. Mechanical Systems: Presumably forced air.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: 3099 Q Street dominates the northeast corner of 31st Street and Q streets from its hillside site. It sits on an embankment approximately 4' above sidewalk grade at the south. Tudor Place is located to the northwest and the W. Taylor Birch house formerly was fronted by companion large brick mansions at the southeast and southwest corners of 31st and Q.

The house fronts onto two sidewalks. From the south sidewalk brick steps and a walk lead to three steps up to a landing in front of the house. From this landing, brownstone steps lead to the entrance. The lower set of steps and flanking walls face south, the second set of steps to the entrance face east. This arrangement supercedes a nineteenth-century arrangement in which straight runs led from the west walk directly to the west entry and from the south walk directly to the south porch. These earlier runs are still present.

The house is framed on all three open sides (south, east and west) by large shade trees.

Brick retaining walls were built in the mid-twentieth century at the south and west sidewalks. In the yard to the east there is an approximately 8' high brick wall to the north and a low snow fence to the east.

2. Historic landscape design: None known.

3. Outbuildings: Approximately 20' from the east wall of the house is a 20' deep and 18' wide sunken garage of c. 1926. Its roof is level with the rear yard and its floor is 10' below rear yard grade. It is entered from Q Street by a downward sloping concrete ramp. There is a flight of 15 concrete steps along west side of the garage up from south to north to the rear yard level.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

This is a revision of the report prepared by Ellen Schwartz and William Thompson. They did the research and wrote the bulk of the report. What historical sources they used are unknown, but it appears that some archival research and interviews with the then owners were the basis for the historical information. At present, the Peabody Room of the Georgetown Branch of the D.C. Public Library is closed so no research could be undertaken there. Recently

conducted research at the National Archives and the Historical Society of Washington did not yield significant, additional information.

Statements pertaining to significance have been rewritten as has much of the discussion of architectural character.

Prepared by: Ellen J. Schwartz, architectural historian, and
William P. Thompson, architect, Commission of Fine Arts, August 1968; and
Bill Lebovich, architectural historian, September 1999

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Georgetown Documentation Project was sponsored by the Commission of Fine Arts and undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) of the National Park Service. Principals involved were Charles H. Atherton, Secretary, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, and E. Blaine Cliver, Chief, HABS/HAER. The documentation was undertaken in two phases. The summer 1998 team was supervised by John P. White, FAIA, Professor of Architecture, Texas Tech University; and architecture technicians Robert C. Anderson, Boston Architectural Center; Aimee Charboneau, Tulane University; Irwin J. Gueco, The Catholic University of America; and Adam Maksay, United States/International Council on Monuments and Sites (US/ICOMOS) architect from the Transylvania Trust. Historic research was initiated by Bryan C. Green, historian, Richmond, Virginia, during this summer. The summer 1999 team was supervised by Roger S. Miller, architect, Alexandria, Virginia, and architecture technicians David Benton, The Catholic University of America; Edward Byrdy, The Catholic University of America; Irwin J. Gueco, The Catholic University of America; and Clara Albert, US/ICOMOS architect from the Transylvania Trust. The project historian, and author of the written reports, was William Lebovich, architectural historian, Chevy Chase, Maryland. The photography was undertaken by Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer, and James Rosenthal, photographic assistant.